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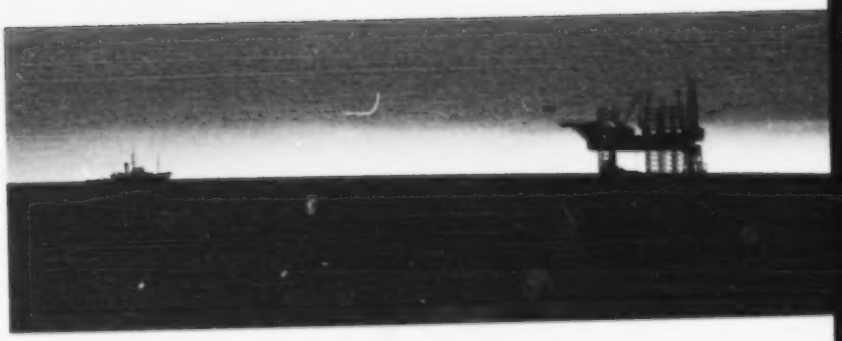
INTRODUCTION

...a shared commitment to work together for our ocean and our future

In 1996, Canada passed the *Oceans Act*, an important and forward-looking piece of legislation designed to modernize ocean management. The *Oceans Act* is built on the principles of sustainable development, integrated and ecosystem-based approaches to management, and collaboration across government and stakeholders.

Ocean uses have been addressed through a patchwork of management, regulatory and planning processes. Traditional management has typically focused on single industries, such as oil and gas, fisheries or shipping. An integrated management approach takes a comprehensive look at the interactions among the many different ocean users, and between humans and the environment.



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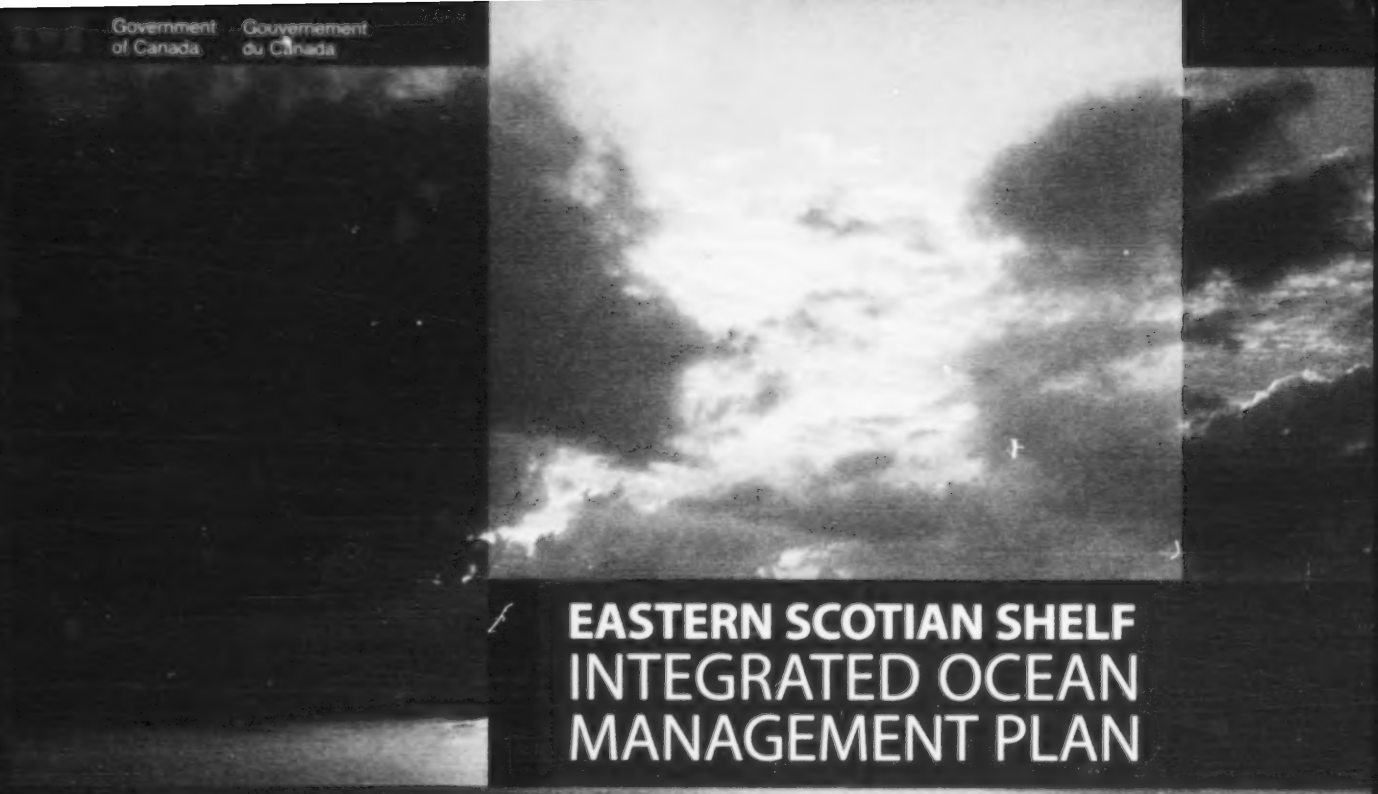


EASTERN SCOTIAN SHELF INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN

SUMMARY

Canada

THE EASTERN SCOTIAN SHELF INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN

2

The Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Ocean Management Plan is a strategic-level plan to provide long-term direction and commitment for integrated, ecosystem-based and adaptive management of marine activities. The Plan contains a comprehensive set of goals, objectives and strategies for collaborative governance and integrated management, sustainable human use, and healthy ecosystems. It has been shaped and accepted by ocean stakeholders, supported and endorsed by government, and is Canada's first integrated ocean management plan under the *Oceans Act*.

The Plan is strategic in its scope and does not provide a detailed prescription of all measures required to achieve its goals and objectives. The intent is to coordinate and enhance existing management processes by linking sector-based plans to an agreed set of goals and objectives.

TOWARD THE EASTERN SCOTIAN SHELF INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN: A TIMELINE

1996

Canada passes new legislation, the *Oceans Act*, to provide a framework for modern ocean management.

1998

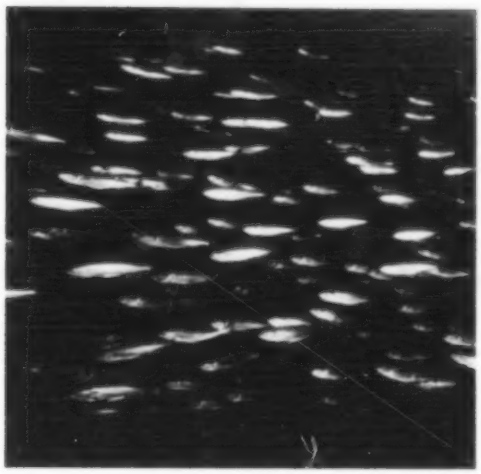
The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announces the Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Management (ESSIM) Initiative as a pilot project under the *Oceans Act*.

1999

2000

The management and regulation of ocean use involves a large number of government departments and agencies. The Plan works within this multi-jurisdictional context. Regulatory authorities remain responsible and accountable for implementing management policies and measures within their existing mandates and jurisdictions. However, government departments are expected to support implementation of the Plan through their management and decision-making powers.

The Plan supports a sustainable and practical balance of human use, while conserving the health and integrity of the marine environment. Ocean stakeholders are expected to pursue the goals and objectives of the Plan while carrying out their plans and activities on the water.



2001

The Federal-Provincial ESSIM Working Group is formed. This group provides an intergovernmental forum for policy, management and regulatory coordination.

2002

The 1st ESSIM Forum Workshop is held in February. This begins the broad multi-stakeholder dialogue on integrated ocean management.

2003

The 2nd ESSIM Forum Workshop is held in February. Discussion is focused on the elements of an integrated ocean management plan and requirements of a collaborative governance structure.

THE PLANNING AREA

The Eastern Scotian Shelf planning area encompasses some 325,000 square kilometres, an area more than six times the size of the adjacent province of Nova Scotia. The area was selected for integrated ocean management because of its important living and non-living marine resources, areas of high biological diversity and productivity, and increasing levels of use and competition for ocean space and resources. (See map on page six)

The focus on the Plan is on the offshore portions of the region, essentially seaward from the Territorial Sea (12 nautical miles). The offshore was chosen as the initial focus for the Plan for several reasons, including the desire to capture the area surrounding the Gully Marine Protected Area, which lies about 200 kilometres offshore, and the need to address increasing levels of multiple human use on the shelf and along the shelf break.

Recognizing that the management needs and approaches for the offshore differ in many ways from the inshore context – especially in terms of jurisdictions, use patterns, ecosystem characteristics and communities of interest – it was decided to first develop an offshore planning process. However, the longer term commitment to build complementary integrated management initiatives for coastal and inshore areas remains.

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The Eastern Scotian Shelf is characterized by large shallow banks on the outer part of the shelf, with basins and smaller banks in the middle and inner shelf. The planning area also includes portions of the continental rise and slope, which is indented by several submarine canyons.

The planning area includes the Gully, Atlantic Canada's first Marine Protected Area. The Gully is the largest marine canyon in eastern North America and contains a rich diversity of marine habitats and species, including deep-sea corals and northern bottlenose whales. Nearby Sable Island is home to wild horses, seals and birds.

TOWARD THE EASTERN SCOTIAN SHELF INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT PLAN: A TIMELINE

2004

The Gully, located centrally in the ESSIM planning area, is designated as Canada's second Marine Protected Area under the *Oceans Act*.

2005

A Draft of the Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Ocean Management Plan is released at the 3rd ESSIM Forum Workshop in February. The focus of the workshop is to review and comment on the draft Plan.

In the fall, the Regional Committee on Ocean Management (RCOM) and the Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC) are formed. RCOM is the senior executive level body for federal and provincial departments

Many components of the Eastern Scotian Shelf ecosystem have changed as a result of human actions and natural variability. From a species perspective, some groups are proliferating, such as pelagic fishes and some benthic invertebrate species, while others have declined and are not rebuilding as quickly as expected, most notably groundfish. Changes in physical habitats, water temperature and productivity have also been observed.

HUMAN USE

A broad range of human activities occur on the Eastern Scotian Shelf. These activities include fisheries, oil and gas, commercial shipping, as well as marine conservation, research, tourism and government operations.

Some portions of the planning area experience relatively high or intensive levels of use, such as regularly fished areas, hydrocarbon production areas, and high vessel traffic areas. Other areas remain little to moderately used. In fact, the Eastern Scotian Shelf is characterized overall by relatively low-to-moderate levels and concentrations of multiple use.

There are also areas of importance and significance to specific user or interest groups. This importance may be derived from traditional use, or from the specific resource, ecological or cultural characteristics of an area or feature. The value placed on access to such areas must be considered when planning for and managing multiple use.

and agencies with ocean-related program activities. The SAC is broadly representative of ocean sectors, communities of interest and stakeholders.

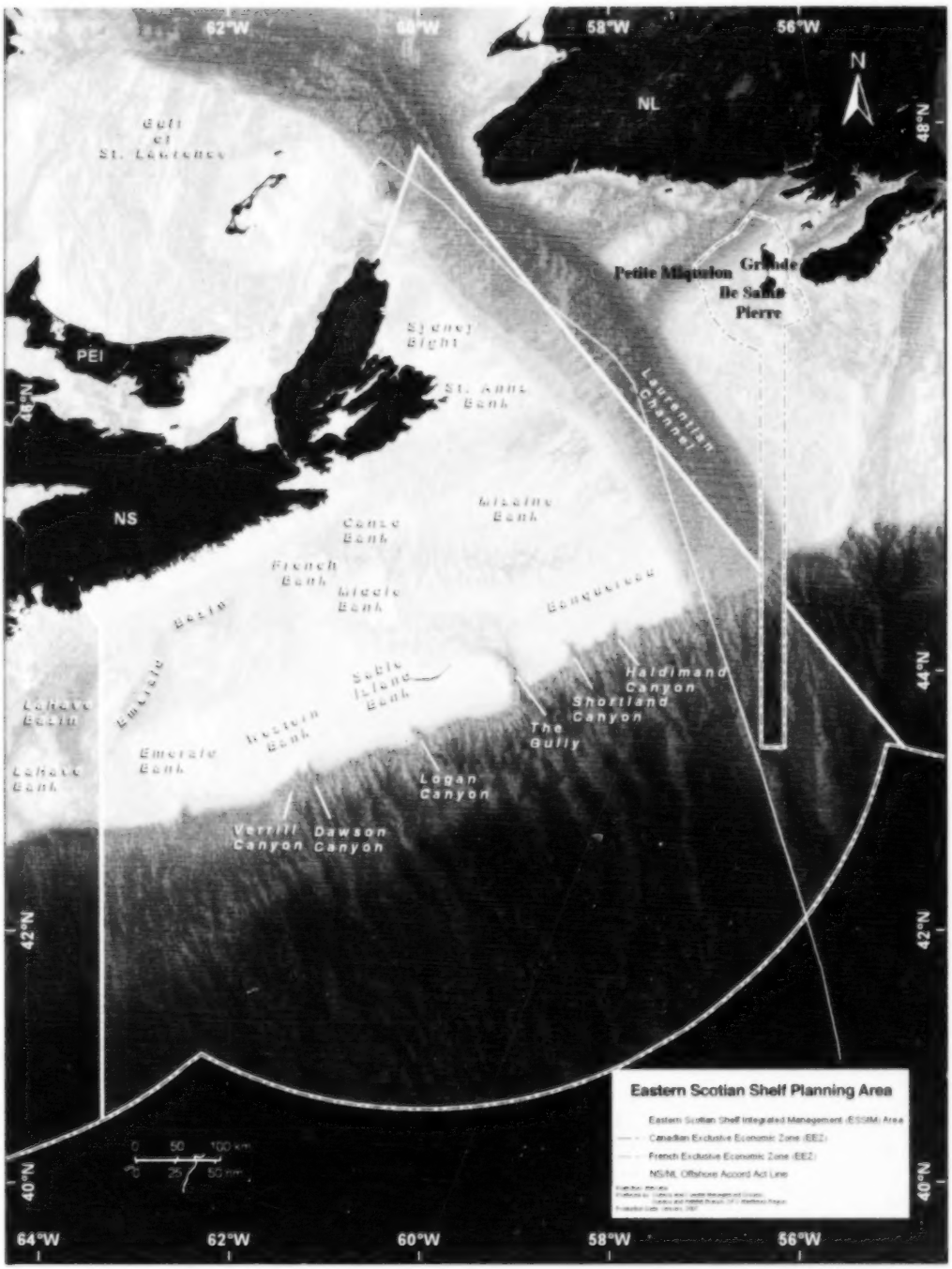
2006

The SAC completes a Final Draft Plan that is released for broader stakeholder and government discussion in July.

In November, the SAC endorses the Plan. A month later, the Plan is endorsed by the RCOM.

2007-08

The Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Ocean Management Plan is released as the country's first integrated management plan under the *Oceans Act*.


62°W
60°W
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N
NL
48°N
Gulf of St. Lawrence
Petite Miquelon
Grande De Saible Pierre
Sydney Bight
PEI
St. Anns Bank
Laurentian Channel
46°N
NS
Canso Bank
Misaine Bank
French Bank
Misaine Bank
Banquereau
Emerald Basin
Sable Island Bank
Haldimand Canyon
Shortland Canyon
The Gully
Logan Canyon
Verrill Canyon
Dawson Canyon
44°N
42°N
40°N
64°W
62°W
60°W
58°W
56°W
0 50 100 km
25 50 mi
Eastern Scotian Shelf Planning Area
Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Management (ESSIM) Area
Canadian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
French Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
NS/NL Offshore Accord Act Line

A VISION FOR THE EASTERN SCOTIAN SHELF

The most important challenge facing any group or organization is the development of a common vision. In order to be acceptable, a vision must accommodate and include the individual desires, needs and aspirations of all of the people involved in the process. In the case of the Eastern Scotian Shelf, the range of interests are diverse and include commercial, Aboriginal and recreational fishing, offshore energy, commercial shipping, marine conservation, submarine cables, scientific research, monitoring and technology development, marine tourism, and numerous government authorities.

In a number of cases, sectors compete with each other for use and access. One of the important achievements of the Plan is that this diverse range of stakeholders reached consensus on a common vision for the Eastern Scotian Shelf:

> ***Healthy and sustainable ecosystems, economies and communities supported by a collaborative, integrated and harmonized governance and management***

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Plan is founded on a number of important principles and approaches:

Integration
Sustainable development
Precaution
Inclusion

Adaptive management
Collaboration
Conservation
Ecosystem-based management
Stewardship

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

8

The Plan has been developed through a multi-stakeholder, collaborative approach involving all interested and affected parties. The underlying premise is that a management plan developed through collaboration will be broadly accepted and used by all involved in the process.

The collaborative planning model for the ESSIM Initiative includes mechanisms that allow various government departments and agencies to work together on ocean management issues. It also includes a mechanism for the various ocean sectors and interest groups to come together to discuss common issues and provide advice to government decision makers.

The collaborative planning model is made up of four main structures.

ESSIM FORUM

The ESSIM Forum serves as a broad general assembly for all stakeholders to participate in the collaborative planning process. Members meet on a biennial basis to provide input and are also kept informed by regular e-newsletters and web-based information.

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

The Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC) shares the responsibility for leadership and guidance in meeting the vision for the ESSIM Initiative. The SAC operates on a consensus basis for the stewardship of the Plan and undertakes monitoring and evaluation functions for plan implementation.

ESSIM Stakeholder Advisory Council: current membership breakdown

Government of Canada	4 members	Conservation Groups	3 members
Government of Nova Scotia	3 members	Community Groups	2 members
Government of Newfoundland & Labrador	1 member	Academic & Private Sector Research	2 members
Offshore Petroleum Board	1 member	Transportation	1 member
Municipal Government	2 members	Telecommunications	1 member
Aboriginal Peoples	2 members	Tourism	1 member
Fisheries	5 members	Citizens at Large (proposed, optional)	1-2 members
Oil and Gas	2 members		

Total: 32 members

The number of representatives for each sector has been developed with primary consideration given to the relative size of the sector, its complexity and economic, social, environmental and legislative links to the planning area. Nomination of citizens at large may be done by the ESSIM Planning Office in consultation with the sectors and interests.

The SAC membership is representative of ocean sectors, communities of interest and stakeholders, and it is balanced by sector as well as other criteria, such as group size, capacity, and commitment to the process.

GOVERNMENT SECTOR STRUCTURE

The government sector structure consists of the Federal-Provincial ESSIM Working Group and the Regional Committee on Ocean Management.

Federal-Provincial ESSIM Working Group

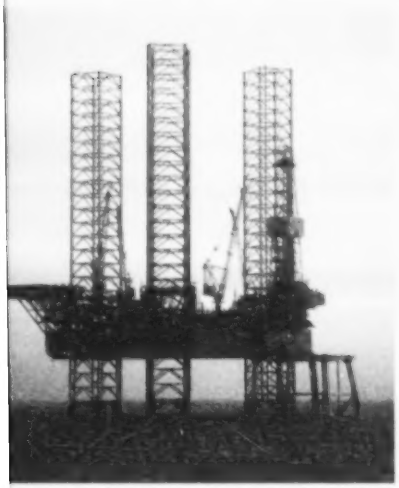
The Federal-Provincial ESSIM Working Group serves as an intergovernmental forum to focus on policy, management and regulatory coordination for the ESSIM Initiative. Membership consists of representatives of over 20 ocean-related federal and provincial departments, agencies and boards.

Regional Committee on Ocean Management (RCOM)

The Regional Committee on Ocean Management (RCOM) is the senior executive level forum for federal and provincial departments and agencies with ocean-related program activities. The RCOM provides advice and recommendations to mandated decision-making processes and relevant government departments, agencies and boards.

ESSIM PLANNING OFFICE

The Planning Office works in cooperation with the SAC and the government sector structure to provide shared leadership and coordination for development and implementation of the Plan. The Planning Office is housed within the Oceans and Coastal Management Division (OCMD) of Fisheries and Oceans Canada at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.



OBJECTIVES-BASED MANAGEMENT

10

Objectives-based management has been used by groups around the world to help them deal effectively with complex, wide-ranging and sometimes competing goals. Objectives-based management is an outcome oriented management system with results that are both measurable and capable of being evaluated.

In an objectives-based framework, overarching goals are supported by more specific objectives for which indicators and targets are set and associated management strategies are taken and measured. Each overarching goal is expressed as an outcome statement. The objectives are what we want to have happen to support the main goals; while strategies are outlined to show the courses of action necessary to reach those objectives. Specific actions, time frames and resource requirements are then outlined in the supporting action planning and implementation processes.

Marine systems are complex and dynamic. With our current understanding of the Scotian Shelf and its dynamics, it is acknowledged that there are certain limits and challenges to what can be achieved through the Plan. Similarly, it is recognized that the Plan can only have a certain amount of influence over various economic, social and governance factors, many of which are external to the planning process itself.

The goals, objectives and strategies for the Plan have been developed to express what we are striving to achieve through integrated and ecosystem-based ocean management over the long term. The Plan is a living document put together by people with the best knowledge available to them. As our knowledge of the system improves, and as circumstances change, the objectives will adapt to accommodate and address these changes.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Plan is to provide a common basis for commitment and action for sustainable use, marine conservation, and integrated ocean management. To achieve this, the Plan is organized around the three overarching goals of collaborative governance and integrated management, sustainable human use, and healthy ecosystems, as set in the box below.

Objectives have been developed for each of the goals. The objectives are organized around a set of core elements to describe more specifically what we want to achieve.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE AND INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT

The goal of collaborative governance and integrated management essentially creates the enabling environment for achieving the goals of sustainable human use and healthy ecosystems. This goal is broken down into the two core elements of integrated management and information and knowledge.

The overall intent of the integrated management element is to provide a more inclusive, collaborative and horizontal approach to the management of our ocean uses and resources. The objectives include establishing new governance structures, ensuring all relevant legal obligations are fulfilled, and promoting user and regulator compliance and accountability.

The objectives under the information and knowledge element are focused on the requirements for strong research and knowledge building to support management decisions. They also stress the importance of information sharing and communication among stakeholders and decision makers.

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN USE

The overall intent of the sustainable human use goal is to ensure that current and future generations continue to receive benefits from and have access to the ocean and its resources. The two interconnected elements for this goal are social and cultural well-being and economic well-being.

The main focus of the social and cultural well-being element is on sustainable communities and healthy

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE AND INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT

- Effective governance structures and processes.
- Capacity among stakeholders.
- Knowledge to support integrated management.

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN USE

- Ecologically sustainable use of ocean space and resources.
- Sustainable communities and economic well-being.

HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

- Resilient and productive ecosystems, with diverse habitats, communities, species and populations.
- Strong marine environmental quality supports ecosystem functioning.

human relationships with the ocean. The objectives under this element emphasize the need for equitable opportunities and access for coastal communities to sustainable livelihoods from the ocean.

This element also recognizes that sustainable human use is dependent on a safe, healthy and secure ocean area for people who derive their living from the sea, reap its recreational benefits or consume products of the sea.

The economic well-being element addresses the economic benefits that are associated with and derived from ocean resources, including renewable and non-renewable resources found in the ocean, on the surface of the ocean, or on or below the ocean floor (e.g., fish, oil and gas). This element also includes the benefits provided by ocean infrastructure (e.g., submarine cables) and other ocean-related activities (e.g., cruise ships and commercial shipping).

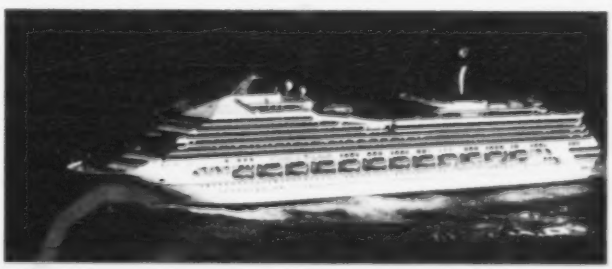
HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

The overall intent of the goal for healthy ecosystems is to ensure that structure, function and environmental quality of the marine ecosystems associated with the Scotian Shelf are not compromised by our management and use. This goal is organized in the three interconnected themes of biodiversity, productivity and marine environmental quality, each containing a set of more specific elements and supporting objectives.

The biodiversity objectives are aimed at the conservation of ecosystem components to support a diversity of communities, assemblages, species and populations. This means that no community, species or population should be lost as a result of human activities.

The productivity objectives focus on achieving healthy conditions for the elements of primary and secondary productivity, trophic structure and population productivity. The overall intent is to ensure that human activity does not cause unacceptable alterations to these core drivers for ecosystem functioning.

The marine environmental quality objectives are intended to safeguard the physical, chemical and habitat elements of marine ecosystems. The objectives are aimed at ensuring that the quality of the environment is capable of supporting the growth and health of marine organisms.



MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The Plan sets out a series of management strategies to achieve the objectives identified for healthy ecosystems, sustainable human use, and collaborative governance and integrated management. Each strategy is intended to represent a general course of activities that will be pursued in order to reach one or more objectives.

The strategies promote the use of various tools and approaches to achieve many of the objectives, such as ocean use mapping and spatial decision support, ecosystem classification and modeling, and industry-led best practices and stewardship programs. The strategies often reference existing programs and initiatives that contribute to the achievement of the objectives. In some cases, the continuation or enhancement of existing programs and initiatives may be all that is required to achieve an objective, while in other cases, entirely new programs and activities will be necessary.

The Plan does not provide details on the specific actions that will be pursued under each strategy or the organizations that will carry them out. Additional detail on management actions, timelines, indicators and lead organizations will be identified though the action planning process that will be used to implement the Plan. In many cases, individual sectors will develop and undertake actions to support the Plan. However, the planning processes will also be used to identify gaps and needs for collaborative action and new efforts.

Two examples of the Plan already in action are highlighted in this section. Seeing the Plan in action as we do here illustrates how strategies and actions can achieve the big picture goals.

OCEAN USE MAPPING: A TOOL FOR DECISION SUPPORT

Understanding spatial and temporal patterns of the ecosystem and human activities is essential to the implementation of integrated management. The ESSIM Planning Office is undertaking a major project to develop a decision support tool for multiple use management on the Scotian Shelf. The first phase focused on the completion of a GIS-based atlas showing the location and extent of major human activities and related management zones and practices in the region. Areas of importance for various ocean uses will be characterized and ecological information will also be incorporated in a subsequent phase. This atlas and its underlying database will form a key component of a spatial-temporal framework to assess risks associated with a range of human activities, including ecosystem impacts and sector activity interactions. The project is designed to support regional ocean planning, management and decision making, including the Eastern Scotian Shelf planning process and the Gully Marine Protected Area. As such, the development of prototype analysis will focus on priority management needs in the region.

The completion of this geospatial assessment tool has been identified in the Plan as a key activity in support of multiple ocean use and marine ecosystem-based management.

14

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The success of the Plan is dependent on continued support and commitment by all stakeholders. The most important way to do this is through meaningful and tangible actions. Governments can incorporate the Plan and its relevant provisions in their departmental policy, program and planning documents. In a similar fashion, stakeholders can incorporate the Plan in their sector plans, codes of conduct, or industry standards, to name but a few available tools.

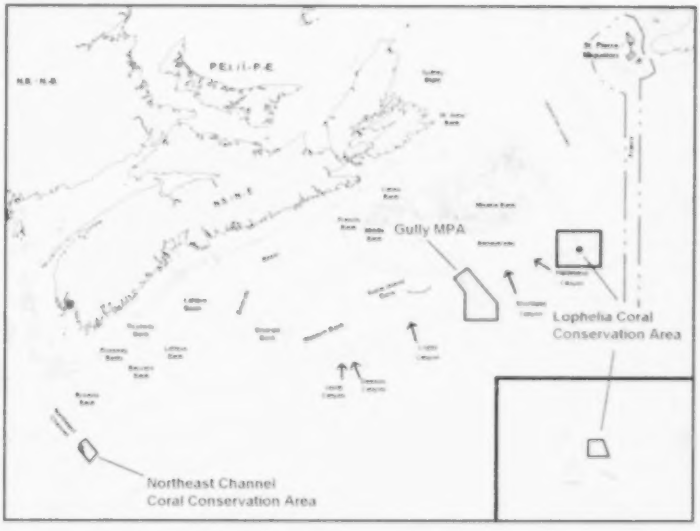
Because so much of the integrated management approach is dependent on government policy integration across a broad spectrum of departments, the question is often posed about what to do when a government authority cannot commit to something found in the Plan. In answer to this important and practical question, the collaborative planning process has been designed so that endorsement of the Plan by a government authority can occur with a commitment to further consideration of the issue in the future. This approach allows the Plan to move forward in the absence of full agreement on all aspects.

As the Plan is implemented over time, there will be a strong need for effective and meaningful performance evaluation. Progress will be measured by outcome indicators for the various objectives, and through results achieved by the specific strategies and supporting actions. Reporting on progress will be transparent and information will be available to all parties. Although the Plan is designed to have a long term life span, it will undergo a comprehensive review every five years.

CORAL CONSERVATION

Tropical corals have long been a focus of marine biodiversity conservation efforts worldwide, but cold-water corals have gained increasing conservation attention in recent years. Their important role in the ecosystem and their sensitivity to human impacts has made them a focus of particular interest. Several fisheries closures have been established on the Scotian Shelf over the past five years to protect corals, including a closure to protect the reef-building coral *Lophelia pertusa* in the Laurentian Channel and a larger closure to protect a variety of corals in the Northeast Channel. While these closures are successful examples of efforts to protect specific coral aggregations on a case-by-case basis, a more comprehensive approach to coral conservation is being sought.

The ESSIM Planning Office recently released a Coral Conservation Plan for the Maritimes Region, based on consultation with ocean stakeholders, scientists and government partners. The plan describes what is known about the species of corals found off Nova Scotia, identifies the key issues related to corals and managing human activities, describes existing management measures, outlines research requirements, and suggests strategies and actions for conserving areas of known and potential importance. The Coral Conservation Plan represents a more coordinated and strategic approach to conservation that will contribute to the objectives of the Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Ocean Management Plan.



MOVING FORWARD

What you've read here is a very brief treatment of the Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Ocean Management Plan, the first of its kind in Canada. The Plan is an important milestone and achievement under the *Oceans Act*, but it does not signify the end of the process. The goals and objectives set out in the Plan are about long-term commitment and change. In other words, the Plan is really only the beginning. It is important to get involved in implementation and action planning, and to do your part in achieving the vision of the Plan.

We encourage you to read the full text of the Plan for a more detailed understanding of the goals, objectives and strategies that are contained within it. You can find the full text of the Plan and all of the supporting documents that have been produced during its development at http://www.mar.dfo-mpo.gc/ca/oceans/e/essim/essim-intro-e.html

The ESSIM Planning Office is always interested and available to meet with organizations and individuals. If you would like to receive a copy of the Plan or discuss next steps in the planning process, please contact us at the following address:

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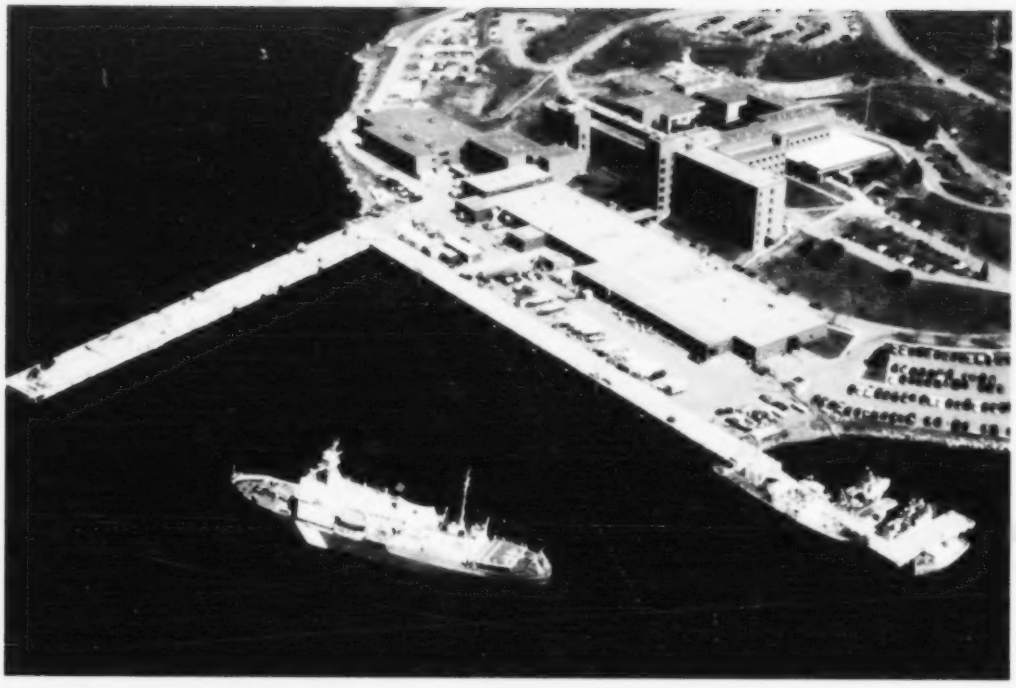

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